

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended, and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-56 are pending in this application, Claims 1, 15, 43, and 54 having been currently amended; and Claims 8, 22, and 53 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for amended Claims 1, 15, 43, and 54 can be found for example, in the original claims, drawings, and specification as originally filed.¹ No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-28 and 43-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ikegami (U.S. Patent No. 6,745,334).

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-28 and 43-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ikegami, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to recite features formally of Claim 8. Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent Claim 1 recites novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied reference.

Amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an image forming apparatus that can include a plurality of applications, the image forming apparatus including, *inter alia*:

...a displaying part displaying a screen used for selecting an application on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus; and

an assigning part assigning a selected application that is selected on the screen to a function key when the function key is pushed, such that the selected application is executed when the function key is later pushed after assigning of the selected application has occurred;

wherein the function key is a key used for a user to select and execute an application from a plurality of applications that are useable on the image forming apparatus and that include at least one of a copy application, a printer application, and a facsimile application, and

¹ See Original Claim 8.

wherein, when the function key is pushed for the selected application, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number.

Amended independent Claims 15 and 43 recites substantially similar features as those recited in independent Claim 1. Thus, the arguments presented below with respect to independent Claim 1 are also applicable to independent Claims 15 and 43.

Ikegami is directed to an image forming apparatus including a display panel which is operated by a plurality of touch sensors. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Ikegami fails to suggest that “when the function key is pushed for the selected application, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number,” as recited in Applicants independent Claim 1.

Pages 5-6 of the outstanding Office Action, in the rejection of former Claim 8, asserts that column 9, lines 44-61 describes the above recited features, and states that Figures 6-8B “clearly shows that copying is possible and therefore it can be done, if it is possible it will tell otherwise.” Applicants respectfully disagree.

Figure 8B of Ikegami shows a display panel 620 that displays two preferred keys. However, Ikegami does not describe that when the preferred keys in display panel 620 are pushed for a selected application, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number.

Column 8, lines 62 to column 9, line 8 of Ikegami states:

FIG. 8A shows a screen for setting the item of a preferred function key 1. This screen is displayed by pressing the user set key 618 and then selecting the setting of the preferred function key 1 at the setting item. By selecting an item on the screen shown in FIG. 8A and then pressing the "OK" key, keys

of functions displayed by the preferred function key can be selected. New keys are displayed on the screen as shown in the example of FIG. 8B.

Thus, Ikegami merely describes that the maximum number of function keys that can be registered can be limited, but does not describe that a function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the preferred function key has already reached a limit number. In other words, Ikegami describes the maximum number of function keys, rather than a maximum number of applications that can be assigned to a particular function key. Also, Ikegami describes that “by selecting an item on the screen showing Figure 8A and then pressing the ‘OK’ key, keys of function displayed by the preferred function key can be selected.” However, this portion of Ikegami does not describe that a *screen is displayed* on the image forming apparatus that *indicates* that the preferred function key 1, 2 cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reach a limit number. In fact, Ikegami does not appear to describe a limit number of applications assigned to a preferred function key at all.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 15, and 43 (and all claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over Ikegami.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-28 and 43-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ikegami be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, and in light of the above discussion, the pending claims as presented herewith are believed to be in condition for formal allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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